Web701 Part 3

Celeste Quinn

# Exploring and describing the edge of web technology

Artificial Intelligence and Web Bots have been around for a few years now, but are still a new technology and further advances in their technology is happening constantly. Currently, a major use case for them is on business websites for customer support. They take a user input, functioning like a chat bot, and based on keywords, to return results specific to what the user has asked. Commonly it can display a list of F.A.Q relevant to what the question was, on varying levels of intelligence. Some bots can only take input of a user clicking on a list of links, others can actually scan custom written input and are more advanced. Higher level bots can also perform functions, such as on a shopping website, the bot can do tasks like look up information on a specific order, show you the tracking/shipping (connecting to an external API), even put in requests to refund the order and process it all automatically without the user even having to search around the website to initiate these things on their own.

A major advantage of using artificial intelligence bots within your website is that users can get immediate assistance 24/7, instead of the traditional method of opening a ticket, and waiting for a support agent to contact you back – or having to go search the depths of a site to find something that a bot can retrieve instantly for you. This allows businesses to achieve higher customer growth and satisfaction levels, and often, customers prefer interacting with a bot rather than an actual other person because of how fast the bot can solve queries. Of course more complex issues would still need to be handled by a live support agent, as currently AI does have limitations about understanding uncommon issues, but coupled with Machine Learning, AI could have unparalleled abilities. These skills can already be seen in AI such as Virtual Assistants – Which can do things like take notes, send emails and texts, make calls, search things for you and display results, create meetings, play music, even control things in your home such as lighting and locking – as well as AI that is programmed to play digital games like chess, and can beat master level human opponents.

My website in this project could benefit from using a chat bot to handle easy support requests, or even to automate and streamline functions like creating new services. There are actually multiple providers for chat bots that come pre-made and ready to install on your website, however you can also create your own custom setup for a bot using IBM’s Watson AI solution. Using that, you can link it up with a chat bot API. Your chatbot’s framework has to be reachable via HTTP to do this, then connect to their service. There is documentation at the [Userlike website](https://www.userlike.com/en/public/tutorial/um/api/chatbots) about how to get started which I would follow after having gotten my framework for a chatbot.

Looking to the future, as I mentioned before, combined with machine learning, there is great potential for AI to have all kinds of developments in web tech. It could streamline so many processes with simple automation that would require the user to have no knowledge of how to perform these tasks, so the most technologically challenged of us can get the AI to do advanced tasks. It could even completely develop a website by itself, allowing for anyone to be able to create things regardless of their coding knowledge and skills. AI will change the face of web design by how it interacts with people, becoming more human in it’s replies with the ability to offer unique answers and engage in conversation, combining automation with human cognition. IBM’s Watson can analyse data it has previously collected about the business such as call logs, previous tickets, inventory, to develop on its own knowledge, solve problems, and predict future outcomes.

I believe this technology could help my website and its user base quite a lot, it looks fairly easy to implement, although I would have to most likely pay for a pre-made bot that I could easily link up with my existing framework, but as a business, the benefits of having the bot and what it can do for my company, like cutting down costs on user support, increased uptime for support, increased growth that having an advanced system would bring to my website, to name a few – outweighs any cost it would take to initially set it up. AI is definitely something that everyone should be watching where it is headed in the future.